

Op-Eds

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General Example

Opinion: Protecting Our Smiles, and Our Future, Starts with the Water We Drink

By *[Your Name]*

When we talk about keeping our communities healthy, most people think of vaccines, clean air, or safe food. But there's another public health success story flowing right from our taps and it's one that's quietly preventing disease, saving families money and helping children thrive every single day.

That story is about community **water fluoridation**.

For more than 80 years, fluoridation has stood as one of the simplest, safest and most cost-effective ways to prevent tooth decay, strengthen enamel and reduce cavities. Entire communities benefit from adjustments to fluoride levels in public water supplies, regardless of income, insurance, or access to dental care.

The results speak for themselves. Communities with fluoride in their water see significantly lower rates of cavities in both children and adults. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named water fluoridation one of the ten greatest public health achievements of the 20th century, right alongside seatbelts and childhood immunizations. The evidence is clear: this small investment yields enormous returns. Every dollar spent on fluoridation can save up to \$30 in dental treatment costs.

Even with overwhelming evidence supporting fluoridation, misinformation continues to circulate, often driven by misunderstanding. People deserve clear, trustworthy information about what's in their water and why it matters. The truth is simple: at recommended levels, fluoride is safe. It's supported by decades of rigorous research from organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association, and the World Health Organization.

Beyond individual health, fluoridation is also about making oral health care more accessible. Not every family can afford regular dental visits or has easy access to oral health care. Community water fluoridation levels the playing field by providing consistent, passive protection that reaches everyone from babies to grandparents, in every neighborhood.

In *[City/County/State]*, we have an opportunity to continue keeping our families and our neighbors safe. Maintaining and expanding fluoridation is one of the most practical steps we can take to protect our community's health. It reduces pain, improves school attendance, supports workforce productivity and saves taxpayers money in the long run.

As local leaders consider infrastructure investments and public health priorities, I urge them to keep science and community well-being at the forefront. Protecting fluoridation programs is not just about oral health. It's about fairness, prevention, and a commitment to evidence-based policy.

About the Author:

[Your Name] is a *[public health professional / community advocate / resident of X County]* who works on initiatives to promote oral health and preventive care.

Op-Eds

Community Advocate Voice (For Local Coalitions, Parents, or Grassroots Groups)

Title: Safe, Simple and Fair: Why Fluoride in Water Matters for Every Family

By *[Your Name]*, *[Community Coalition or Affiliation]*

When I fill my kids' water bottles for school each morning, I'm grateful that what's coming out of the tap does more than keep them hydrated, it helps keep them healthy.

Community water fluoridation may not make headlines, but it's one of the most powerful and fair public health protections we have. It helps everyone regardless of income, insurance, or where they live benefit from the simple act of drinking water.

For decades, science has shown that fluoride in water prevents tooth decay. Children in fluoridated communities have fewer cavities, miss fewer school days, and have lower dental costs. Adults benefit too with healthier teeth, fewer infections, and less need for expensive dental care later in life.

Here's the best part: it's completely safe. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association, and the World Health Organization all agree that fluoride at recommended levels is both safe and effective. It's been studied for more than 75 years, and the results are consistent: fluoridation works.

Unfortunately, misinformation about fluoride spreads easily online and can sound convincing. But the facts are clear. Fluoride is a natural mineral that's simply adjusted in our water systems to the optimal level for preventing tooth decay. The process is just like fortifying milk with vitamin D or salt with iodine.

Fluoridation is also one of the few health interventions that reaches everyone, from toddlers to seniors, without the need for appointments, insurance or co-pays. It's a public good that reflects our community values in *[insert Community]*, and our care for one another's health.

So the next time you turn on the tap, take pride in what that water represents. It's not just clean, it's caring. It's one of the few things that truly benefits everyone, every day.

Let's keep it that way.

About the Author:

[Your Name] is a *[parent / advocate / member of the [Community Coalition Name]]* working to advance oral health and access to care in *[City/County]*.

Op-Eds

Health Professional Voice (For Clinicians, Health Departments, or Policy Outlets)

Title: Evidence, Access, and Prevention: Why Water Fluoridation Still Matters

By *[Your Name], [Credentials or Affiliation]*

As a *[dentist / public health professional / healthcare provider]*, I often see how something as simple as preventive care can make the difference between a healthy smile and a painful one. One of the most effective and most overlooked forms of prevention isn't found in a dental office or a prescription pad. It's found in our tap water.

Community water fluoridation remains an essential piece of modern public health. More than seven decades of research confirm that it's safe and effective in reducing tooth decay across all ages. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls it one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century, and for good reason.

Fluoridation reduces cavities by about 25 percent in both children and adults. It saves millions of dollars in treatment costs every year. Most importantly, it provides equitable protection for those who face barriers to routine dental care, including rural residents, older adults and low-income families.

At a time when public health budgets are stretched thin, keeping fluoride in our water is both a scientific and moral imperative. The evidence is clear: at recommended levels, fluoride is safe. The benefits are huge, the costs are minimal, and the reach is universal.

Yet across the country, some communities are considering removing fluoride from their water. That would be a devastating step back for community health and preventive care. It would shift costs from prevention to treatment, from shared public health investment to individual burden.

We cannot afford to lose one of our most effective, equitable, and evidence-based public health tools. As health professionals, we must continue to advocate for policies grounded in science and compassion that protect our most basic right: access to safe, healthy water.

Because when our water is protected, our health is too.

About the Author:

[Your Name], [Degrees/Credentials], is a *[position]* at *[organization/institution]* and has worked in *[field, e.g., community dentistry, public health, child development]* for over *[X]* years.